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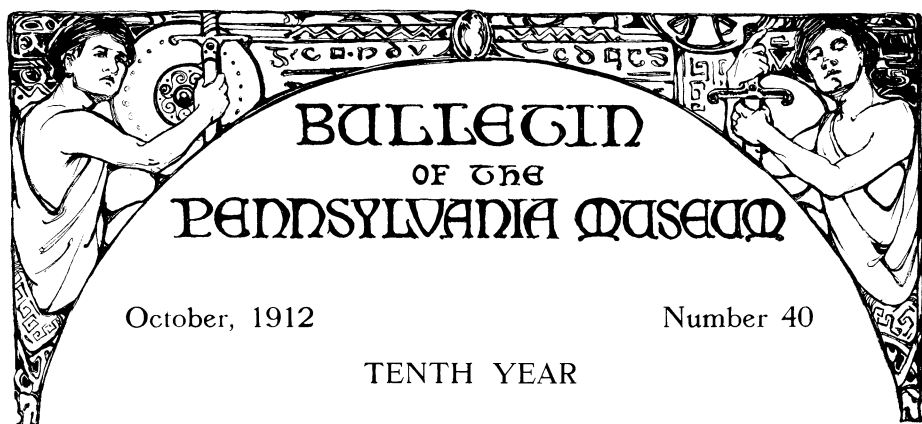
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AN OLD INTERIOR FROM THE AUSTRIAN TYROL

By purchase, the Museum has acquired the curious wall paintings of a room once in the cottage of a well-to-do Tyrolese peasant resident of the Ziller Valley. On one of these panels—which, as well as the fifth panel in the series, obviously is either a restoration or a substitute for an older original panel—is an inscription bearing date 1831. The Colli Brothers of Innsbruck, through whom the room was obtained, state that such restorations are not uncommon, and claim that the original panels go back to 1780 or 1790. The Director of the Innsbruck Museum, Karl von Radinger, who has specialized in Tyrolese art, agrees with the dealer that the original panels are older and go back at least to the time of Napoleon I, or 1800. He avers that it is of common occurrence to find such restorations of earlier work, and mentions certain pieces in the Innsbruck collection in which the new owners of such furniture, when this changed hands, caused it to be restored and to have the date of this event added. He also states that there are pieces in his museum on which the restoration in size-colors having peeled, the original painting has shown beneath.

With regard to the recent acquisition of the Pennsylvania Museum, the same authority states it to be his belief that it was restored by the painter Mader of Halle, who retouched mainly the ornamental parts; and he very freely stakes his reputation as an expert that judging from the costumes worn by the figures and by the houses depicted: "It is inconceivable that they were done after the time of Napoleon". He declares that the exhibit should be labeled without hesitation as of a date "prior to 1800".

Be this as it may, the paneling is extremely curious. It consists of fifteen large panels five feet eleven inches high and varying from one foot nine inches to two feet eleven inches in width. In addition to these, the series includes a door and six additional small panels used to make up the wall where windows and doors occur; besides there are fittings, borders, etc.

A ceiling of modern workmanship, made in imitation of the old work to correspond with the original walls, was provided by the Colli Brothers and has enabled those in charge to reconstruct the room in its entirety. It has been

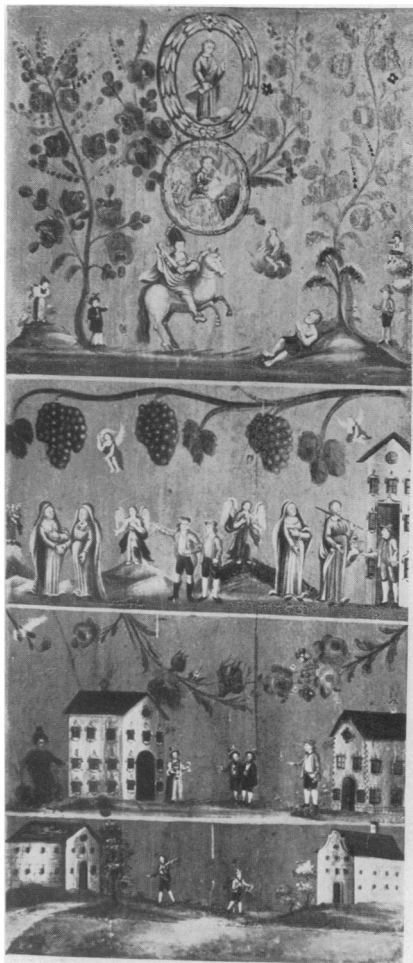
suggested that this room may have been an artist's studio, but the exiguity of the room—twelve feet by eight feet—and especially of the windows which admit little light, makes this seem improbable.

The panels represent scenes of the Tyrolese peasant's life and of his religion. The colors are vivid and are painted on a dull yellow or mustard ground-work. None of the work can lay claim to high art, but the whole is highly characteristic of the people, and there is considerable action in the drawing of the figures of men and animals. Some of the attitudes betray a lurking sense of humor in the artist's observation of nature and human life as he saw it. It would appear that such paneling is not only typical of the taste of the people, but is extremely rare, and, if not unique, would be difficult to duplicate. Such is the opinion of Privy Councilor Professor Wieser, who saw the panels before they were secured by the Museum, and also of the above quoted Director of the Innsbruck Museum, who was consulted before the series was acquired.

The paneling was taken from an old wooden house or cottage which stands in the Ziller Valley near Kattenbach in Tyrol, about two thousand five hundred feet up the mountain. The house is known as "Riedheim". Professor Dr. Haberland of the Vienna Museum was impressed by it and is said to have coveted it. At this time, however, the Pennsylvania Museum had an option on it.

The main interest of such a series of crude decorative motives lies in the reproduction they present of the manners, cus-

tom, dress and mode of thought of a somewhat isolated mountain community. The costumes, notably the hats and long coats, the implements found in the hands of the workmen, show the scenes to belong to the workaday life of a century ago. The architectural forms depicted are in accord with this estimate.



FIRST ORIGINAL PANEL
The Annunciation

Through the period of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, the region suffered much and its inhabitants became too poor to waste time on artistic adornment and the native art to a large extent disappeared.

The general scheme of the decoration on the panels is in three zones or sections, the topmost of which is 26 inches, varying to 22, and even 20, inches in width, painted on mustard yellow ground with rose trees, the spreading branches of which form a sort of background, broken upon by two or three medallions enclosing religious scenes. Below these, forming a ground plan to this zone, are secular scenes of local rural life.

The middle zone is only about 14 inches wide and is devoted to an exposition of the life of Christ. Beginning with the first panel to the right, on which is depicted the scenes of the Annunciation and the marriage of the Virgin, each panel shows some scene taken from the Gospel, until after the eye has followed the series around the room as it approaches the left corner, it meets with the scenes of the Passion, Crucifixion and Ascension. The entire set of these scenes, with two interrupting exceptions, is executed under a grape-vine, the bunches of which are preternaturally large in their relation to the size of the human figures, and probably are intended to locate the historic drama in the land of Canaan. Of the two exceptional panels in the series, one is that which is stated by Colli Brothers and Professor von Radinger to have been restored. Besides bearing the inscription over the holy group in the scene of the Adoration of the Magi "*Gloria In Excelsis Deo*",—it also bears under the upper section the legend:

"Kein Stand ist aufgenommen Lehret der H. Chrysostomus, aber diese welche die Höllische peynen stäts betrachten, und vor Augen haben werden nicht darein fallen 1831."

which relates to the legend of S. Chrysostome represented to the left of the picture. The saint is seated; with him an angel is showing to the faithful the



SECOND ORIGINAL PANEL
The Nativity

narrow, winding path to heaven and eternal bliss, while on the right stands open the fiery mouth of the dragon of Hell, and devils who lead to it sinners quaintly represented in their act of shortcomings, in a sort of danse macabre.



THIRD PANEL, RESTORATION
of 1831
Adoration of Magi

selves are decorated with flower pots of roses between trees with here a stag, there a bird or a man to enliven the scene, while the division between the upper and the lower panels is decorated with a Madonna and Child, a St. George and the Dragon, and another mythical equestrian figure.

It seems obvious that in the restoration little attention was paid to the original, if indeed the panels in question do not belong to another series. Both panel No. 2 and the lower part of panel No. 5 are undoubtedly by the same hand. In the latter we have—entirely out of the Gospel sequence which it interrupts—the scene of the last judgment. Christ is seated above on a rainbow and surrounded by flying angels, many of whom quaintly carry tools of the carpenter's trade, while others sound the trumpet blast. Below, the graves are giving up their dead; and the just are being called to Heaven and the wicked to Hell—which again, as in No. 2, is represented by the open fiery mouth of a dragon, being fed by devils. Moreover, in coloring and execution, the work is strikingly different from the rest of the room. However this may be, the lower register or zone in all the original panels—but as has been seen, not in these two—is given over to scenes of workaday life. Houses, men and women working or tending their flocks, or shooting at targets or walking in their gardens.

The paintings on the door, the groundwork of which is dull blue with dull red mouldings, present the same general mode of thought. The board running above the upper panel is covered with a strip of canvas painted with religious figures. At both ends, however, two Austrian soldiers stand at attention. A restoration has been made of panels No. 11 and 14 by the same process of stretching a painted canvas over the damaged panel. The panels of the door them-

A narrow frieze of dull blue and red runs along the top of the room above the panels, finished above and below with mouldings of red and blue. It is decorated with garlands of flowers, running deer and chamois. The washboard, sills, and other finish are likewise blue and red. The ceiling is divided into thirty-two sections or panels, divided by mouldings of red and blue, decorated with geometric outlines in the centre and flowers in the four corners of each panel. While the ceiling and all mouldings are modern, they are exact reproductions of the original finish of such buildings.

In setting up the room in the Museum, care has been taken, in making such adaptations as were necessary, to adhere to the general character of the paneling. The outer casing of the room has been stained to correspond with the background of the paneling, and the dull blue trimmings of doors and windows recall the interior where such facings occur.

It is intended to furnish the room with Tyrolese furniture of the same style and period used by the peasants and characteristic of the people.

S. Y. S.



SO-CALLED BOW-PULLERS

In the Hammer Collection of the Pennsylvania Museum are one perfect bronze object and two fragments of similar objects of which examples in other museums are labeled "bow-pullers". They are implements, varying in size and workmanship, in the form of two rings springing from a solid center from which rise a cluster of three or four spikes; Furtwängler figures one with five spikes.⁽¹⁾ Usually the rings turn slightly upward so that the base of the object made to stand on a flat surface is not perfectly horizontal. Some specimens—notably one in the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, and another illustrated by Charvet, reproduced by Moss—are elaborately decorated; others are plain; some, like the example in the Hammer Collection, show plainly signs of wear on the outside rims of the rings, having obviously been attached to some other object or surface and exposed to hard usage. This is confirmed by a close observation of the spikes, which frequently, as in our specimens, are bent or even broken. These objects have received attention from a number of scholars who have made a variety of suggestions concerning their use. How the idea of their being bow-pullers originated I am unaware, but whether under the label *Bogenspanner* in German, or *tira archi* in Italian, or *tire d'arc* in French, curators in general have followed one another to this day, reproducing and perpetuating an error that Prof. Morse exposed most clearly in his highly interesting, if negative, paper published in the transactions of the Essex Institute in 1894,⁽²⁾ which was widely reproduced. In this he very

(1) And in the Zchille Collection exhibited in Chicago, and closely examined by the present writer in the discharge of her duties as member of the Jury for Ethnology, was one example of two.

(2) Essex Inst. Bull. Vol. XXVI, 1894.